

Message Text

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: FAO, UN

SUBJECT: FAO AND ROLE OF WOMEN IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT

REF: STATE 021127

SUMMARY: FAO HAS REVISED ITS REGULATIONS TO ELIMINATE ANY DISCRIMINATION AMONG ITS EMPLOYEES FOR REASON OF THEIR SEX, BUT PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN IN PROFESSIONAL POSTS IS STILL LOW WITHOUT ANY REAL PROGRAM TO IMPROVE SITUATION. FAO CONFERENCE RESOLUTION ON ROLE OF WOMEN IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT HAS NOT BEEN FOLLOWED UP ON YET. FAO WOMEN'S GROUP PRESSING FOR PROGRESS, BUT DOUBTFUL OF MUCH SUCCESS UNTIL ACTIVELY SUPPORTED BY TOP ECHELONS OF FAO. END SUMMARY.

1. FAO HAS BEEN SLOW IN INTEGRATION OF WOMEN INTO ITS OPERATIONS. ONLY IN 1975 AND STILL IN 1976 IS FAO CONCLUDING REVIEW OF ITS EMPLOYEE REGULATIONS TO REMOVE DISCRIMINATION BY SEX. DISCUSSIONS WITH FAO PERSONNEL OFFICIALS INDICATE THIS REVIEW IS NOW ESSENTIALLY COMPLETE AND NECESSARY STAFF REGULATIONS AMENDED TO ELIMINATE ANY DISCRIMINATION. THUS, AS FAR AS STAFF TREATMENT BY WRITTEN RULES, REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES ARE CONCERNED, FAO NOW CONSIDERS THAT IT IS ON UNCLASSIFIED

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PAR WITH REST OF U.N. AND NO DISCRIMINATION EXISTS.

2. FAO EMPLOYMENT OF PROFESSIONAL WOMEN IS LOW. IN JANUARY 1975 PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN AMONG THE FAO'S REGULAR PROGRAM STAFF WAS 5.62 0/0 AND IN JANUARY 1976 IT WAS 6.30 0/0. THERE ARE NO D-2 AND NOW TWO D-1 LEVEL POSTS HELD BY WOMEN IN FAO. THERE ARE ALSO VERY LOW PERCENTAGES OF WOMEN AT P-5 AND P-4 LEVELS. FAO IS TRYING TO INCREASE THESE PERCENTAGES, BUT ITS EFFORTS ARE LIMITED AND AS INDICATED HAVE NOT SHOWN MUCH RESULTS. RECRUITMENT MISSIONS SENT TO FEW COUNTRIES LAST YEAR WERE ASKED TO STRESS DESIRE OF FAO TO EMPLOY QUALIFIED WOMEN. RECRUITMENT OFFICER IN WASHINGTON FOR FAO HAS SAME INSTRUCTION AND HAS BEEN IN CONTACT WITH MANY WOMEN'S ORGANIZATIONS IN SEARCH FOR QUALIFIED WOMEN. HOWEVER, FAO PERSONNEL OFFICERS DO NOT HOLD OUT MUCH HOPE FOR ANY SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN WOMEN PROFESSIONAL EMPLOYEES. FAO DOCUMENT SUMMARIZED FAO THINKING AS FOLLOWS. QUOTE: OUR PRACTICES FOLLOW THOSE OF OTHER UN AGENCIES IN ELIMINATION OF ALL DISCRIMINATORY POLICIES, REGULATIONS AND PROCEDURES AS WELL AS POSITIVE EFFORTS TO INCREASE NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS RECEIVED FROM WOMEN. PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN SERVING IN SECRETARIAT OF OTHER AGENCIES DEPENDS TO SOME EXTENT ON FUNCTION OR MISSION OF AGENCY. THOSE DEALING WITH MORE SPECIALIZED TECHNICAL OR SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMMES TEND TO HAVE LOWER PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN. AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES HAVE NOT TRADITIONALLY BEEN OF INTEREST TO WOMEN AND THEREFORE PROBLEM FACED BY FAO IS MORE DIFFICULT THAN SAY UNESCO. THIS IS BORNE OUT BY FACT THAT OF 206 FEMALE PROFESSIONAL STAFF IN ORGANIZATION, 145 ARE AT HEADQUARTERS, 8 IN REGIONAL OFFICES AND 53 IN FIELD. UNQUOTE.

3. THERE IS SMALL ACTIVE WOMEN'S GROUP AT FAO; BUT, BEYOND THIS GROUP, MOSTLY AMERICANS, ISSUE IS NOT TOO ACTIVE. QUESTIONNAIRE TO ALL FAO WOMEN ONLY RECEIVED 15 0/0 RESPONSE. ISSUES LIKE NURSERY, MORE WOMEN PERSONNEL OFFICERS, AND WOMEN'S CONTACT GROUP WITH PERSONNEL ARE BEING PRESSED BY FAO WOMEN'S GROUP.

4. RESOLUTION 10/75, ON ROLE OF WOMEN IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT, PASSED BY 18TH FAO CONFERENCE AT END OF NOVEMBER 1976 HAS NOT BEEN ACTED UPON AS YET. SPECIFICALLY, FAO PROGRAMS ARE NOT UNCLASSIFIED

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INCLUDING INPACT STATEMENTS ON INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND REVIEW OF FAO PROGRAM OF WORK AND BUDGET BEING CARRIED OUT BY NEW DIRECTOR-GENERAL FOR COUNCIL SESSION OF JULY 1976 DOES NOT TO DATE INCLUDE ANY REVIEW OF ROLE OF WOMEN IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT. IN FACT, FAO DID NOT SEND REPRESENTATIVE TO RECENT GENEVA UN MEETING ON THIS SUBJECT, BECAUSE, IT WAS SAID, THERE IS NO FAO POLICY ON SUBJECT.

5. POLICY AND PROGRAM CONTROL UNIT OF THE FAO'S DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT HAS NO INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO FOLLOW UP ON RESOLUTION 10/75, PARAGRAPH 4, REQUESTING FAO DIRECTOR-GENERAL TO ENSURE CURRENT PROGRAMS WILL LEAD TO FULL INTEGRATION OF WOMEN OR TO INCLUDE AN IMPACT STATEMENT ON HOW PROPOSED PROGRAMS WILL LEAD TO THIS INTEGRATION. HOWEVER, INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT HAS BEEN INCLUDED IN REGIONAL CONFERENCES, PER PARAGRAPH 4 C OF RESOLUTION.

6. WITHIN FAO, POLICY ON WOMEN IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT HAS BEEN CENTERED (UNDULY IN OUR OPINION) IN HUMAN RESOURCES, INSTITUTIONS AND AGRARIAN REFORM DIVISION. THIS DIVISION HAS SENT EXPERT TO INDONESIA TO ASSIST IN EFFORTS TO INTEGRATE WOMEN IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT, BUT PLANNED EXPANSION OF THIS TYPE OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE HAS BEEN STOPPED BY CUT OF TWO NEW POSITIONS FOR THIS PROGRAM IN CONNECTION WITH NEW DIRECTOR-GENERAL SAOUMA'S REVIEW OF OVERALL FAO BUDGET AND PROGRAM. THIS DIVISION HAS ALSO CHAIRED FAO'S PREPARATIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S YEAR. AD HOC COMMITTEE TO PREPARE FOR IWY IS PREPARING ITS FINAL REPORT AND WILL BE DISSOLVED SOON. IT IS PROPOSED, HOWEVER, TO CREATE NEW COMMITTEE "INTER-DIVISIONAL WORKING GROUP ON THE INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND NUTRITION POLICIES." THIS GROUP UNDER ITS DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE WOULD FOLLOW UP ON ISSUES RAISED IN RESOLUTION 10/75 OF FAO CONFERENCE. BUT AS DRAFTERS OF THESE TERMS OF REFERENCE SAID, UNLESS TOP-LEVEL FAO OFFICIALS CLEARLY INDICATE THEIR SUPPORT FOR GOALS OF RESOLUTION 10/75, NO CONCRETE ACTION CAN BE EXPECTED.VOLPE

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